

**STATEMENT OF STEPHEN P. MARTIN, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES, CONCERNING S. 958, TO AMEND THE NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM ACT TO DESIGNATE THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER TRAIL IN THE STATES OF MARYLAND AND VIRGINIA AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AS A NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL.**

**July 28, 2005**

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Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to present the Department of the Interior's views on S. 958, a bill to amend the National Trails System Act to designate the Star-Spangled Banner Trail as a National Historic Trail.

The Department supports S. 958, which would designate an approximately 290-mile land and water trail extending from southern Maryland through the District of Columbia and Virginia along the Chesapeake Bay. The land routes would follow existing public roads, along which British and American troops traveled. The bill would require the Secretary to encourage public participation and consult with landowners, Federal, State, and local agencies on the administration of the trail. The bill would prohibit land or interest in land outside the exterior boundaries of any federally administered area from being acquired for the trail without the consent of the owner.

The proposed National Historic Trail would commemorate the events leading up to the writing of "The Star-Spangled Banner" during the Chesapeake Campaign of the War of 1812. These events include the British invasion of Maryland, the Battle of Bladensburg, the burning of the White House and the Capitol, the burning of the Washington Navy Yard, and the Battle for Baltimore in the summer of 1814. The route of the invasion is known and documented, and the proposed trail would follow it as closely as practical.

The War of 1812 and the Chesapeake Campaign of 1814 had long-lasting and far-reaching effects on the United States and American culture. It represented the first major test of our infant democracy, contributed to the formation of a national identity, and demonstrated the importance of a strong military and the need for coastal defenses. During the campaign, other events occurred that are significant to our nation's heritage, particularly the writing of the poem commemorating a key battle -- the Battle for Baltimore. Francis Scott Key's poem, the words of which comprise our National Anthem, celebrated the resiliency of the young nation and the flag he described as "The Star-Spangled Banner" during the successful defense of Fort McHenry. The events provide important testimony, too, about the roles of the enslaved and civilians in the early defense of the nation.

Should S. 958 be enacted, the National Park Service, subject to availability of funds, would prepare a comprehensive management plan with widespread public participation to identify the goals and objectives for trail preservation, research, interpretation, public use, trail marking, and cooperative management. The bill recognizes the advantages offered by the regional nature of the trail and the many organizations interested in and associated with the history of the Chesapeake Campaign. Several key trail-related resources, such as Fort McHenry and the White House, are owned by the Federal government. We anticipate that other trail-related resources such as structures within Old Town Alexandria in Virginia or Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum in Maryland will primarily remain in local or private ownership.

In 1999, the Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail Study Act (Public Law 106-135) was enacted authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to study the potential route of a Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail. The history, background, integrity, and national significance of the trail were researched and analyzed. The criteria for national trails, set forth in the National Trails Systems Act, were applied, and five of the eight trail study segments were found to meet the necessary criteria. The proposed 290-mile trail would only include these five segments.

Providing conservation and enjoyment of, public access to, and interpretation of the historic route and its resources has been a growing focus of both public and private initiatives in recent years as the Bicentennial of the War of 1812 approaches. In Maryland, a grassroots initiative was undertaken to raise public awareness of the important events that occurred in the Chesapeake region in the summer of 1814 during the War of 1812. Historians and regional groups recognized the untold stories and legacy of the events of the Chesapeake Campaign and the need for protection and interpretation of related historical resources.

The proposed trail represents an opportunity for an effective partnership among Federal, State, and local governments, a dedicated trail organization, and the many public and private site managers to administer and maintain a federally designated commemorative trail along the historic routes of the Chesapeake Campaign. Because of its emphasis on partnerships, this approach provides the greatest flexibility for resource protection while creating a framework for interpretation and visitor experience.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my remarks and I would be happy to respond to any questions that you and the committee may have.